Ernest Orlando Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

March 2, 2005

Director Steven Chu
Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory
1 Cyclotron Rd.,
Berkeley, CA, 94720

Dear Director Chu:

Congratulations on submitting the proposal for the new contract to run LBNL! We appreciate your efforts to ensure that employee benefits, particularly retirement will be unaffected by the new contract. We also appreciate the supportive statements by both you and President Dynes.

Among the 500 general sciences employees, there are quite a number who are eligible for retirement. To varying degrees, they are alarmed by the current unsettled situation. Some of these employees may consider making their retirement decisions before the new contract takes effect in early summer. If so, we would like them to base their decision on facts, rather than rumors. Unfortunately, at this point in time, there is no hard information as to what will happen to the pension plan and the medical insurance under the new contract.

We realize that any ongoing negotiations are best conducted in private, and that it is difficult to make detailed public statements. On the other hand, there may be a few questions you can answer to ease the tension. For example:
- When is the deadline to submit a retirement application in order to retire under the terms of the old contract?
- When will employees have a chance to read the new contract?
- Will employees have enough time to read the text of the new contract and make an informed decision about retirement?

Specifically, when can information become available to employees? If you strongly believe that it won't make any difference which contract they retire under, then if you can publicly and clearly state this, it will calm many employees' minds.

Respectfully Yours,

Joe Kwan, General Sciences Workplace Committee Chair
    and other committee members: Gerald Abrams, Madelyn Bello, Yuen-Dat Chan, Martha Condon, Daniel Dietderich, Angela Galtieri, and Spencer Klein.

Cc: James Siegrist,
     James Symons,
     Richard Gough